

Citizen Trade Policy Commission

Tuesday, November 9, 2004

Meeting Summary

Members present: Sen. Stephen Stanley (co-chair), Rep. John Patrick (co-chair), Sen. Margaret Rotundo, Sen. Richard Kneeland, Rep. Roderick Carr, Rep. Deborah Hutton, , Matt Schlobohm, Paul Volckhausen, James Wilfong, Dr. Robert Weiss, Bjorn Claeson, Mark Haggerty, Cynthia Phinney, Elizabeth Wyman, Mary Ellen Johnston, Vanessa Santarelli

Members absent: Carla Dickstein, Barbara Van Burgel, Richard Coyle, Jim Dusch, Paul Chartrand

Staff present: Curtis Bentley, Legislative Analyst and Nicole Dube, Legislative Analyst

I. Introductions

Rep. Patrick convened the Commission meeting and asked Commission members to introduce themselves and make introductory remarks.

II. Forum on Trade and Democracy Presentation

Director, Peter Riggs and Jennifer Gerbasi from the Forum on Democracy on Trade (FTD) provided the commission an orientation/background on international trade agreements and governance and sector issues. The Forum on Trade and Democracy, a non-profit organization affiliated with the Georgetown School of Law, provides legal and technical assistance and networking support to states working on trade issues. They noted that Maine's Citizen Trade Policy Commission is the first state commission in the country charged with local democracy and oversight. The presentation provided the following information:

International Trading System

FTD staff first provided commission members with an overview of the international trading system, including background information on international agreements (World Trade Organization), regional agreements (NAFTA, CAFTA, FTAA) and bilateral agreements (US-Australia, US-Singapore, US-Chile). New developments in trade agreements, upcoming negotiations, and key rules were also discussed.

Dispute Resolution

WTO and NAFTA dispute resolution is handled by arbitration tribunals, whose authority supercedes federal law. FTD staff noted that these arbitration tribunals have the authority to punish the United States through retaliatory trade sanctions and NAFTA's investment chapter (Chapter 11) can award unlimited monetary damages for any local government action found to be in violation of international trade agreements.

Case Studies

FTD staff provided the commission with case studies focused on six policy areas – prescription drugs (Australia FTA, GATS), agriculture (WTO), energy, water resources (GATT, NAFTA), government procurement (WTO) and gambling (GATS).

State Oversight of International Trade

The commission discussed strategies to improve state oversight of trade policies. FTD staff suggested focusing on a few key areas of concern, working with the Congressional delegation, national associations, posing questions for the USTR, participating in multi-state working groups, and convening hearings on state oversight of international trade. The group also discussed other state approaches, including

California, which has a Senate Select Committee, Washington, which has a Joint Legislative Oversight Committee, and Idaho, which has oversight from an existing standing committee on energy.

III. Scoping Out Key Policy Issues and Developing a Work Plan -- Commission Discussion

Commission members discussed their perspectives on the key policy issues and workplan for the Commission. Recognizing the scope of trade policy issues impacting Maine is beyond the commission's capacity, commission members decided that it would be beneficial to choose policy areas of concern on which to initially focus their work. The commission voted to form the following three subcommittees:

1. Natural Resources/Environment - Rep. Carr, Mark Haggerty, Paul Volckhausen, Bjorn Claeson, Jim Dusch, Jim Wilfong, and Mary Ellen Johnston
2. Healthcare - Rep. Patrick, Sen. Rotundo, Dr. Robert Weiss, Liz Wyman, Matt Schlobohm, and Barbara Van Burel
3. Labor/Economic Development. Rep. Hutton, Cynthia Phinney, Peter Connell, Vanessa Santarelli, Richard Coyle, Carla Dickstein, and Paul Chartrand

All three subcommittees will focus on four main tasks: Functional Roles in Maine, Tracking/Negotiations, Future Legislation, and Public Education. In addition, the commission agreed on the following next steps"

- The commission agreed to hold its third meeting on Tuesday, December 7th at 9:00 AM. The full commission will convene in the morning and subcommittees will meet in the afternoon.
- Subcommittees will develop individual workplans and will report back to the full commission no later than January 15th.
- The commission agreed to consider introducing legislation this legislative session that would require the Maine's state point of contact (SPOC) to the USTR to report to the Commission and the legislature.
- The commission requested additional information from staff regarding the Governor's Canadian Advisory Committee.
- The commission directed staff to draft introductory letters to the Maine Congressional Delegation, the USTR, and IGPAC.
- The commission agreed to hold a public hearing on Thursday, January 27th from 7-9 PM in Bangor. Rep. Carr agreed to make initial contact with the Husson College Business Center to check availability.

IV. Adjournment

The Commission meeting was adjourned at 3:30 pm.